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## REPORT

CD NO.

COUNTRY	USSR
SUBJECT	Transportation - Road building
HOW PUBLISHED	Monthly periodical
WHERE PUBLISHED	Moscow
DATE PUBLISHED	May 1949
LANGUAGE	Russian

DATE OF INFORMATION 1949

DATE DIST. *22* Aug 1949

NO. OF PAGES

SUPPLEMENT TO  
REPORT NO.

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SOURCE Mekhanizatsiya trudoyemkikh i tyazhelykh rabot. No 5, 1949.

ROAD-MACHINE STATIONS IN BAD SHAPE;  
NO OPERATIONAL PLANS AS OF APRIL 1949

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Until very recently, road building and the manufacture of road-building materials was carried out chiefly by manual labor and horse haulage. As a result, construction of each kilometer of road required 5,000 man-days.

In March 1948, the government promulgated a decree on the organization of road-machine stations. This action was to have great significance for the mechanization of road-building work.

Road-machine stations were organized under the main road administrations of the union republics during 1948-1949 for the construction and repair of motor roads. Each of these stations, properly equipped, was expected to construct each season 100 kilometers of black-top roads and 50 kilometers of hard-surface roads to insure year-round movement of motor transport.

Road-machine stations rely on a progressive technical base of production. After the war, a Ministry of Construction- and Road-Machine Building was organized and received tens of plants from various departments. In 1948 production of scrapers increased 3.3 times in comparison with 1947, production of bulldozers 2.6 times, and dump trucks 2.4 times. Truck graders, mobile and stationary rock crushers and other types of equipment were put into production.

A team of excavating machines comprising graders, scrapers and bulldozers, can excavate 600,000 cubic meters of earth per season. Rollers of various sizes and types can roll more than 300,000 square meters of hard-surface road per season. For local spreading and mixing of black cementing materials road-machine stations are provided with asphalt spreaders which can pour up to 2,000 tons of cementing materials per season, asphalt melting

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boilers, graders, and the necessary crushers, gravel sorters, conveyors, and other machines. Road-machine stations can process 30,000 cubic meters of rock per season. Twelve dump trucks and five edging machines are the required motor transport of road-machine stations which have to haul up to one million ton-kilometers over a distance of 8 - 10 kilometers. Every road-machine station has repair shops with 12 metal-working machine tools. The governmental decree also provides road-machine stations with the necessary fuels and lubricants and with trained personnel, including road engineers.

According to the decree, road-machine stations must operate as cost-accounting organizations, directly subordinate to the main road administrations of their union republics, and are prohibited from using their equipment for any work not connected with road building. Almost half of the road-machine stations provided by the decree come under the Main Road Administration under the Council of Ministers RSFSR (Pchelyakov, chief). This administration doubled the number of its caterpillar tractors in 1948. The road builders of the RSFSR received more tractors in one year than they had received for many previous years taken together. Previously, they had not even had one S-80 tractor. All the tractors received in 1948 were powerful S-80 tractors. In one year the number of trucks increased 30 percent, heavy graders 50 percent; the number of rock-crushing machines was more than doubled, motor rollers, tripled; asphalt-spreading trucks were increased tenfold. The RSFSR road builders received big scrapers with a load capacity of 6 cubic meters and powerful bulldozers, of which they had not previously had even one.

Although the assistance of the government in the technical re-equipment of road-building organizations in the RSFSR might have been expected to give good results, the Main Road Administration under the Council of Ministers RSFSR actually carried out less than 7 percent of the volume of work planned for the road-machine stations in 1948.

We must look for the causes of this low level of production in the Road Administration itself. In the first place the organization of road-machine stations was inadmissibly delayed. Most of the stations were organized in September-October 1948 instead of on 1 May as planned. For a long time many of these stations were not provided with engineering personnel, road builders, foremen, or qualified workers. Many stations still do not have quarters for their employees. For example, Road-Machine Station No 1 in Barnaul was only organized in late September, and by the end of the first quarter of 1949 it was not even properly staffed. Instead of seven engineers to carry out directional duties, only one engineer was at work. The remaining duties were simply dropped from the T/O. This station had neither workshops for repair of equipment nor fuel storage points.

Although Road-Machine Station No 15 in Pskov was set up 21 July 1948, it did not have a director until September. In 1948, only two road detachments actually worked at this station. How irresponsibly personnel were selected for this station may be judged from the fact that shortly after operations had been begun, four mechanics, two tractor drivers, and ten truck drivers had to be dismissed. Because of a lack of storage space, this road-machine station had to store its fuel with other organizations which could not guarantee its safekeeping. As a result, key machines lost 229 machine shifts through idleness. In 1948, Road-Machine Station No 15 (Shapovalov, director) carried out only 15 percent of its planned quota of work.

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Road-Machine Station No 20 in Stavropol' (Zaprutskiy, director) was organized in September 1948. Up to the present, it does not have its own manufacturing buildings, living quarters, warehouses, or sheds. Valuable materials are stored in a tiny warehouse area of 13 square meters. In 1948 this station did not produce a single kilometer of paved road.

At Road-Machine Station No 2 in Sterlitamak, Bashkir ASSR (Osipov, director), personnel shortages (lacking in 1948 a detachment chief, two engineers, six tractor drivers, four graders, and foremen) resulted in exceptionally inadequate utilization of equipment and in almost complete nonexecution of the plan of work. In 1948 this station constructed a total of only 3 kilometers of roads.

There are many other examples of unsatisfactory organization of road-machine stations.

The Main Road Administration under the Council of Ministers RSFSR has not always provided road-machine stations with proper or necessary equipment. There are examples of one station being sent tractors without trailer equipment, and of other stations receiving trailer equipment and having to wait a long time for tractors. Road-Machine Station No 1 began receiving tractors in June 1948 but received no trailer equipment until September. Of course, such partial equipping is nonproductive and leads to direct loss.

The Main Road Administration under the Council of Ministers RSFSR did not submit to its road-machine stations the plan for the volume of work approved by the government for 1948. The final plan for the road-machine stations provided for a significantly lower volume of work than was required by the governmental decree. Moreover, in most cases these final plans did not provide for completion of over-all construction work or for restoration of specified section of road, but only for individual types of work: excavating, procurement of materials, transport. Even these limited tasks were not carried out with all available means. Much equipment was left idle or inadequately utilized. In some stations there were no plans, no indication as to work organization of machines and no other instructions.

At Road-Machine Station No 1 (Pryadik, director) tractors with graders worked only 250 machine days instead of a possible 822; D-147 scrapers, 150 instead of 578. Rock crushers, gravel sorters, and asphalt spreaders did not operate at all. At Road-Machine Station No 2 tractors operated only 22 percent of their available working time; graders, 12 percent; motor rollers, not at all.

At Road-Machine Station No 15 bulldozers operated only 45 machine days out of a possible 283. The coefficient of utilization of motor transport at this station was 0.46 instead of the planned 0.75.

In 1948, Road-Machine Station No 3 of Vologda Oblast (Podmorin, director) did better work than the other stations. This station carried out the plan for the construction of the gravel road from Yaroslavl' to Vologda. Bulldozers were especially efficient in this work; their coefficient of utilization was 0.80. Station No 3 trained leaders and carried out progressive reward payments of labor. In 1948, 887,000 rubles had been provided for the work by the final plan. The work actually cost only 444,000 rubles, or half the planned cost. Unfortunately, there are very few of these good examples.

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A considerable number of road-machine stations must be in operation during the 1949 road-building season. They must guarantee construction of 7,000 kilometers of new black-top roads. If the labor or working elements of the rural population is joined to that of the road-machine stations, which was not done in 1948, the state plan for the construction and restoration of roads can be carried out and exceeded. However, the tempo of preparation of the Main Road Administration under the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR for the 1949 construction season is alarming. It suffices to say that at the end of the first quarter the stations had not yet been given their production tasks for 1949.

Unless the Main Administration can solve in practice all the organizational and technical problems connected with fulfillment of the road-building plan for 1949, it will repeat its old mistakes with disastrous results.

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